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Bilingual education is the process of instructing the child in his native language in some or all the curricular areas while he is learning English in the public school. This process prevents academic retardation due to a lack of proficiency in the English language. Bilingual education gives each student a base for success in the world of work, while preserving and enriching the cultural and human resources of a people. It is recommended that pilot programs and demonstration projects in bilingual and bicultural education initiated under Title 7 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act illustrate how other federal assistance programs could better be used to support similar educational undertakings. It is also suggested that more emphasis be placed on inservice programs in bilingual teacher education. (DA)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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National Conference on Educational Opportunities for the Mexican-American
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BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Just a year ago President Johnson said, "The time has come to focus our efforts more intensely on the Mexican-American. Even before the President's statement many agencies and organizations, both public and private, were giving increasing attention to the educational challenges of the Mexican-American. Some of the State Departments of Education, the NEA, the U.S. Civil Rights Commission to name just a few. The Federal government followed the President's call for action by appointing a National Advisory Committee on Mexican-American Education, and creating a Mexican-American Affairs Unit in the Office of Education. Through the leadership of this committee today's conference was developed. This conference represents the recognition for a coordinated, nation-wide, action-oriented attack on the educational needs of the Mexican-American.

The enactment of the Bilingual Education Act, now Title VII of ESEA, sharpens this increasing emphasis on the education of the Mexican-American. It provides a national commitment for important change in the educational policy of most school districts. It gives moral and legislative recognition to the assets of a people whose mother tongue is not English. It may be the first step toward the desirable

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and attainable goal of a bilingual society. It says to other nations that the United States can and will work toward the education of its people in the richness of differences--not just racial, but linguistic and cultural.

The implementation of Title VII is an important consideration at this conference. Concepts of bilingual education will, I hope, be a vital aspect of any educational program for the Mexican-American. How Title VII may be a vital part of the bilingual education program of your school is most important.

The Bureau of the Budget has recommended that an appropriation of $5 million be sought for the Fiscal Year '69. Some of us Chicanos ~~Some of us in the Office of Education and elsewhere~~ are pushing hard for increasing this amount substantially. Our chances of success are dependent upon many factors, but we can not diminish our efforts for an amount sufficient to make a substantial impact on the problem.

The administration of Title VII has been given to the Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education and has been assigned to the Division of Plans and Supplementary Centers, better known as the Title III, ESEA section. The guidelines are still being prepared and at this time I can not predict a date when they will be ready for general distribution. Certainly some of the time in the discussion period to follow should be

given to recommendations for inclusion in the guidelines. Present recommendations for administration of Title VII call for a Bilingual Branch in the Division of Plans and Supplementary Centers.

Some of the thinking in the latest drafts follow these lines. Funds will be used for exemplary pilot or demonstration projects in bilingual and bicultural education in a variety of settings, particularly to show how other programs of Federal assistance could better be used to support similar education. "New and imaginative" means, programs, services, and activities which either have not existed for the target group during the three years immediately preceding the effective date of the grant, or which are to be increased, improved, or extended to a significant extent by the means of the project should get prime consideration.

The funding range is ages 3 through 18 plus corresponding adult groups, particularly those who are parents of the children participating in the bilingual programs. Priorities for proposal approval will center on bilingual schooling in grade one or earlier. Planning for at least eventual extension of bilingual schooling through grade six. Use of teachers who have native or native-like fluency in the non-English tongue, and who have studies through the medium of that tongue. Supplementation of efforts under

such programs as Headstart, Follow Through, or ESEA Title I will also be given prime consideration.

At least during the first years of the program, special attention will be given to devising effective models to help carry out what will be a significant change in educational policy for most school districts. Based on a relative small amount being available in FY-69, the Office of Education will seek out and encourage the development of demonstration and pilot programs that will provide models for adaptation and implementation by school districts as they gear up to move into their own bilingual schooling. The areas I have just presented are important parts of the draft of the guidelines. I suggest that you forward your ideas to the Office of Education for consideration in the final draft.

What are we really talking about when we say bilingual education? No one can deny that considerable confusion exists over the concept. Bilingual education means the opportunity to teach the child educational concepts in all phases of the curriculum in his mother tongue while he is learning English. This means we are preventing his educational retardation while reinforcing his language and his culture. It is not foreign language teaching and is not done by foreign language teachers. It is the teaching of arithmetic, and science and history by teachers who speak the mother tongue.

It is the teaching of English as a second language at the same time.

Its basic premise is that of daily instruction in the mother tongue as a language and through the mother tongue as the medium of instruction for all students who are not native speakers of English. In cases where there is a fairly equal group of native speakers of English, a program can be developed where all children can become bilingual. The Coral Way School in Miami is a good example of such a program. For those of you who have an English as Second Language program in your school, you are already partly on the way to a bilingual program.

Obviously one of the key ingredients in bilingual education is the teacher who can teach subject matter in the mother tongue of the child. Training or obtaining these teachers will not be easy--but I suggest that many such teachers do exist right now probably on your staff--seek them out, give them preparation and you can be ready to put bilingual education into operation in your primary grades next fall.

I have been saying for almost a year that we need 100,000 bilingual teachers by 1970, and 90 per cent of them competent in Spanish. This summer we are making the move toward that goal. Through the Teacher Corps, we are conducting a 6-week high intensity language training project which is designed to give communication competency in Spanish to Teacher Corps Interns entering this program. If the project achieves

our expectations, we should be able to adapt such a program for in-service and perhaps even pre-service training of teachers during the summer.

Bilingual education is critical for hundreds of thousands of youngsters. Language is not just an instrument for communication and learning; it is also a total way of thinking, feeling and acting. It is a set of values. It is his being. It is a door that we can open so the youngster can see and live and be a part of two cultures--two societies. Dr. Sabine Ulibarri of the University of New Mexico puts it so well. "In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was made flesh. It was so in the beginning and is so today. The language, the Word, carries with in it the history, the culture, the traditions, the very life of a people, the flesh."

The child's confidence, his appetite for learning, his joy of existence are all better assured if he is able to communicate in his mother tongue. His understanding of himself as a human being becomes a most dominant factor in his interaction with the society where he must function. Bilingualism must come to be accepted as a blessing--not a problem in our society. It must be cultivated--not neglected.

No longer can our school policies, both state and local, ignore or forbid the use of the mother tongue for learning and for communication. Our national commitment

in Title VII says that no longer can we retreat from our educational responsibilities to educate equally the non-English speaking youngster through utilization of his mother tongue. No longer under the flag of "Americanism" or "melting pot" can we say that English shall be the only language of the school. Bilingual education will provide a learning process through the mother tongue---which will be followed closely by the learning of English. Then both languages will produce a bilingual, bicultural citizen with abilities to serve effectively himself and his society. And, to me, that is the utlimate goal of education.

Bilingual education serves five positive purposes for the child and the school. It reduces retardation through ability to learn with the mother tongue immediately. It reinforces the relations of the school and the home through a common communication bond. It projects the individual into an atmosphere of personal identification, self-worth, and achievement. It gives the student a base for success in the world of work. It preserves and enriches the cultural and human resources of a people.

Dr. Bruce Gaarder of the Office of Education proposes a simple policy as the basis for a bilingual program.

1. The child's first schooling should be in the mother tongue and he should be made literate in Spanish first.

2. English should be introduced orally in the first grade as a second language.

3. Thereafter both languages should be used as media of instruction, the time devoted to Spanish diminishing to one-third of the school day by sixth grade and to one academic subject throughout high school.

4. Despite the "ethnocentric illusion" that in the United States English cannot be considered a "foreign" language, it is a foreign language to a child who does not speak it and must be taught as a second language if it is to be taught effectively.

Bilingual education is not a substitute for a well developed educational program; now will it make a poor program much better. Its role is a visable thread of strength in the total program. And it needs to be woven in very carefully. I am afraid that in too many cases attempts will be made to thrust bilingual education into a good or poor educational environment, and when something goes wrong--blame the bilingual education component. But let's get underway despite these dangers.

I see some potential problems as we move forward beyond the careful placement of bilingualism in the present curriculum. I am concerned about the sensitivity of the Office of Education in the administration of Title VII. This is not just another law to be poured into the regular gears of administrative machinery. And with the same

operators at the controls. It will require a high degree of perception of both the linguistic and cultural attitudes, feelings, and needs of the people for whom the programs will be designed. And this same perception must be present in the development of programs at the local schools and in the universities. Let's not get hung-up on matters of administrative experience, or credentials, or degrees, or senority in seeking out and placing in positions of policy and administration, Mexican-Americans who have the linguistic competency and the cultural background to make bilingual education a success. Mexican-Americans in education are still greatly under-used in those school programs where their skills are an absolute must. There must be full participation by the Mexican-American community--professional and non-professional--in the implementation of bilingual education. I don't subscribe to the idea that "you have to be one to teach one" but true cultural insight is in short supply and we better use those whose insight is inborn not acquired. There must be no foul-up in this important breakthrough for the Mexican-American. The money may be pitifully little--resourceful use of it is imperative.

I think the following considerations should be a part of the operation of Title VII. That the funds not be used for research--enough is available for us to get underway.

That the funds should finance action programs designed to benefit the people directly. That no grant should be made unless the institution is prepared to carry on the activity supported as a regular part of its program. Priority must be given to programs that are truly bilingual, designed to develop facility in use of both languages. That no money should go for equipment. There are resources in other Federal assistance programs for this. Some attention should be given to one or two programs to investigate attitudes toward bilingual education in some parts of the Southwest. Emphasis should be given to in-service rather than pre-service programs until the teacher education schools are willing to take a good hard look at their entire curriculum and its relevance to the education of the bilingual, bicultural person. Grants should be made with a priority toward programs where bilingual bicultural people are employed in policy and high administrative positions--I have said this before--but I want to re-emphasize this point. Coordination of any bilingual program should be made with Title I, Title II, Title III ESEA programs and with OEO when possible.

With all these cautions and safeguards, the effect of bilingual education will be nil unless the schools where this need is imperative moves vigorously to fulfill some minimum commitments to equal educational opportunity for the Mexican-American.

Two of the most devastating effects on the Mexican-American in his attitude and participation in education is his language rejection and his rejection as an equal person in the educational climate. One of these--language--we hope to reduce and e ventually eliminate. The second is more subtle and consequently more difficult.

I am talking about the appearance of his child's school. To be sure, not all schools in the Southwest are rundown, nor are all those that are rundown in the barrio. But I see a lot of them that are. And mostly its neglect. Broken windows unrepaired, playgrounds littered and poorly landscaped, old or wornout equipment, inadequate lighting and space. This is one place where the Chicano quickly feels that the visible neglect of his child's school equated by a similar neglect of him as a person and an equal in the community. It really doesn't take much thought to conclude that a community's concern or commitment to its human resources can be sharply reflected in its schools.

I am talking about individualization of instruction. Far too often the same text-book is used in all the schools of the district regardless of their particular needs. If the book the little Chicano is using has nothing in it with which he can identify--how relevant is it to his learning? Do the materials used encourage his achievement potential? Do the films often portray a sterotype of him? How many of his materials

are selected with him in mind? This is just as important a part of individualized instruction as working with him individually or in small groups.

I am talking about the teacher. We need a bilingual teacher in every classroom in every elementary school in the Southwest where we have Mexican-Americans. And if there isn't a bilingual teacher in that classroom there should be a bilingual aide from the community. I want to see teachers who project high goals and high expectations to all her children. I want to see her compensate for her deficiencies in preparation for teaching these youngsters just as the school sets up programs based on compensation for the alleged deficiencies of the youngsters. Also the time has come for the school to recognize that it must change its program to meet the youngster instead of trying to compensate the youngster for failure to meet the school. If this school compensation would take place, many of our youngsters wouldn't be so hard pressed to make adjustments and change far beyond their understanding or ability.

I want to see teachers spending more time in the community after school. They don't have to live there-though it wouldn't be a bad idea--but they should get involved in community activities. And these activities shouldn't be directly related to their school responsibilities. One of the best ways I know to bridge the culture gap, and come over strong and clear in understanding and feelings, is participation in the

community and its life.

I want to see more cultural consideration on the part of the school. Use of language is important, but recognition of cultural values and customs is even more important. The Jews and Negroes have almost conquered the school in their battle to gain cultural and historical recognition. The Mexican-American who takes off for Mexican Independence Day is still regarded as having blatant disrespect for the school value of regular attendance. Schools in most communities recognize absence for dental appointments as necessary, but are still shook if the Mexican-American girl stays home to take care of her younger brothers and sisters because her mother has a business errand. Let's get some things in proper perspective. Before we introduce bilingual education into our programs, let's make sure we have re-evaluated our whole approach on the education of the Mexican-American. Unless we give full and consistent attention to the cultural values of the Mexican-American, bilingual education in any form will fall short. This I can not stress too much.

I see Title VII a mandate for movement. This is a chance to give our country educated bilinguals from our public schools. We must move with this program with or without funds from Title VII. The message of this conference in the area of bilingual education is "Get with it!" I recently heard the Superintendent of a large city school system say, "We will have bilingual education programs with or without Federal funds."

The national commitment for bilingual education is a strong moral and psychological force for change. Such a force needs only your commitment for action. The most powerful resource you can put into operation is your own determination to "get with it!"